



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OPERATION KINGS COURT RESULTS IN ARRESTS ON DRUG TRAFFICKING CHARGES

(Lufkin, TX) This morning, a combined task force of federal, state and local law enforcement agents began arresting individuals who are alleged to be involved in a large scale drug trafficking ring in the Eastern District of Texas. The arrests mark the final phase of a nearly four-year investigation into the sale and distribution of illegal drugs, including cocaine and marijuana.

The government's investigation, dubbed Operation Kings Court, has targeted the activities of a Lufkin/Nacogdoches drug distribution ring since late 2002. Agents discovered that conspirators had utilized and recruited various suppliers to acquire large quantities of illegal drugs to sell and distribute. As a result of this investigation, a criminal complaint has been filed charging eleven (11) individuals with Conspiracy to Possess with the Intent to Distribute illegal drugs.

In addition to making the arrests, officers from several local, state and federal agencies also began executing search warrants for numerous properties and residences, seeking additional evidence concerning the activity of the narcotics conspiracy. Currently, ten (10) defendants are in custody. Authorities

will continue to make arrests during the day.

Matthew D. Orwig, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, praised the work of the investigators for their efforts to deal with criminal drug activity. "The disruption and dismantling of organizations like these that so negatively impact the lives of our citizens will continue to be a top priority of law enforcement in the Eastern District of Texas."

If convicted, the defendants face up to life in federal prison and a \$4 million fine. Prosecutors will seek criminal forfeiture of any property determined to be the proceeds of illegal activities. It is important to note that a complaint is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of either guilt or innocence. All defendants are considered innocent until proven otherwise.

Today's early morning arrests and searches were a joint effort that included the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), as well as officers of the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Lufkin Police Department, the Nacogdoches Sheriff's Office, and the Nacogdoches Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Reynaldo Morin is prosecuting the case.

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